

Dear Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Catherine Bradley and I live in Ridgefield. I support S.B. 1178, An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days, and urge you to vote this bill out of committee.

From August 2020 to August 2022, I worked part-time jobs while I attended graduate school online. Throughout those two years, I was never eligible for paid sick days. My first part-time job was at a grocery store where I worked an average of 20 hours per week for seven months. This was before Covid-19 vaccines were available, and I was constantly on guard as I saw co-workers contract the virus. Though my risk for becoming sick was at an all-time high, under the current law, I was not eligible for paid sick time until I had worked 680 hours at the store. That would have taken at least 8.5 months at my 20-hour-a-week schedule.

I left that job after seven months due to stressors caused by unpredictable scheduling. I then worked for a year and a half as a receptionist at a small medical office. My job satisfaction increased immensely as I had a more predictable schedule and higher wages. However, because the office employed less than 50 people, I still had no paid sick time under our current law. In January 2022, I tested positive for Covid-19 at the height of the Omicron outbreak. I missed three days of work while I was quarantining in order to keep my co-workers and patients safe. Still, because I did not have access to paid sick days, I lost \$280 in wages. For many hourly wage workers across the state, that money could be the difference in whether or not they can pay for rent, utilities, or groceries for that month.

Illness does not discriminate based on how long you have worked at a company, whether you work full-time or part-time, or how big your company is. Every worker in Connecticut deserves to be able to care for themselves or a loved one without worrying about losing valuable wages. It is also important to note that hourly wage workers are disproportionately women and people of color, making this an important racial, gender, and economic justice issue.

I strongly support the expansion of paid sick days in our state and ask you to vote favorably on S.B. 1178. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Bradley
Ridgefield, CT